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The weather today will be generally fair and slightly warmer, with south-west winds.

NOT TOO LATE TO REED.

There can be little doubt in any man's mind but that the court house vault-fixture bidders have been in collusion for the purpose of securing a contract from the county in which all might share the profits. The agreement, a copy of which is published this morning, shows conclusively that the parties to it undertook to combine for a fixed purpose, and that purpose was not to compete for the work, but to conspire to secure it for one of the companies at a price above its worth. In advertising for bids the supervisors invited an honorable competition. They did not anticipate that it would attract a selfish combination of manufacturers whose ambition it would be to fix a schedule of prices for fixtures, and then submit separate and distinct bids from its members. While the companies have an unquestioned right to combine in their own interest yet, to conspire for the purpose of securing a pre-arranged contract is not commendable in any square-dealing, upright and honest firm or number of firms. The supervisors are exposed to the charge of showing favoritism in awarding the contract at a figure greatly in excess of the lowest bid, and some persons will hurry to the conclusion that the members of the board are more or less interested by reason of personal favors shown to them by representatives of the successful company. All such conclusions are not only cheap and premature, but they are absurd. The cry of bootleg is raised whenever a body of men authorize a contract that carries with it an expenditure of public money no matter what the circumstances or incentives leading to it may be. In this instance the supervisors have been deceived by a number of tricky agents ably seconded and supported in their scheming by their paid attorneys. If any mistake has been made there is yet time to correct it. Today's session may be profitably devoted to a reconsideration of the whole matter.

SEEKING PROTECTION.

More than a million bales of cotton than can be profitably marketed were grown in the south the past year. The price has declined from 10 cents per pound to 6 1/2 cents. The overproduction and a glutted market are responsible for the decline just the same as the overproduction of cereals and unrestricted foreign competition in 1890 reduced wheat to 50 cents a bushel. To guard against injury to our farmers by reason of foreign competition in the home markets the present tariff imposes a duty on foreign grown cereals and they are practically shut out, thereby protecting them from the Ryot labor-produced wheat of India, and the overstocked granaries of the world at large. The southerners are just awakening to the fact that their northern brethren are profiting by a system that fosters home industry and maintains the price of cereals. The overproduction of cotton has been succeeded by a glutted market. The growers find that the Egyptian cotton-grower enters the market and offers his product at a price so low that he is forced to meet it or hold his cotton. Last week 4,000 bales of Egyptian cotton were offered in New York. He learns that manufacturers will buy where they can buy cheapest, and he goes into the market and sells his cotton against the cotton of Egypt. Having learned these facts the southerners are now seeking relief. Their lofty notions about free markets and free trade with all the world are not so exalted as they have been. They are breaking away from the heresies of theory and fiction to the truths of practice and fact. The pinching times in the south have squeezed them. They want protection. Not alone from Egypt's slave-grown cotton but from China's coolie-grown rice. The south will yet shake itself free from the mold and rust of tradition and forsake the army of visionary free traders. When this shall be done that section will share with all the rest of the country the benefits of practical protection.

GERRYMANDERING EVILS.

One of the most pernicious evils attached to our political system is the modern gerrymander. Intoxicated with temporary power, secured by accidental success, the drift of all legislative bodies is toward perpetuating the majority in office by partisan and arbitrary divisions of representative districts. But little attention is given to geographical convenience or county boundaries, so long as it is possible to cluster several counties together in which the aggregate vote shows a clear majority for the party in power. To such an extent is this practice carried that in many states the congressional districts, especially, are so monstrously grotesque and unsymmetrical that the science of geometry is at a loss to furnish words to describe their forms and shapes. Last winter the democrats were in a majority in the state legislature of Michigan. The lower house was democratic by reason of an unexpected accident; the upper house was made democratic by an unblinking

theft. With this questionable power the two houses redistricted the state. A determined effort was made to gerrymander, but there was not enough democratic counties to tie on to the republican counties to insure a certain democratic majority, and for that reason the partisanship exhibited was only comparatively outrageous. However, what could not be done by the gerrymander was accomplished in the passage of the iniquitous Miser law. Just now the legislature of the state of New York is engaged in an effort to perpetuate the democrats in power. It proposes to enumerate the inhabitants of the state in defiance of the constitution, and to redistrict the state so as to increase its democratic delegation in congress. In Ohio the republican legislature is trying to undo the democratic gerrymander made two years ago and substitute a still more radical and offensive one in its own interest. Honorable men of both parties deprecate this miserable policy. It shocks confidence in the purity of our statesmanship, and breeds suspicion and distrust for the permanence of our institutions. Instead of the contemptible pot-house tactics, and the reprehensible trickery embodied in the modern gerrymander, it would be far better for the people and for politics, to let honesty and fairness prevail in redistricting the state.

PALMER ON SILVER.

One of the most outspoken, as well as conscientious democrats in the country is Senator Palmer of Illinois. He is a politician, but of that class of politicians whose ambition it is to be right in principle and honorable in practice. On the subject of free coinage he comes out squarely and says: "I hardly believe that the country really needs or wants any more silver coin. There are now piled up in the treasury some three millions of dollars worth of silver at its present value. Undoubtedly a bill favoring free silver would give a great deal of enthusiasm to many members of the party and make them do much more work than they would otherwise. The issue was squarely made in Ohio, and the free silver plank in the platform certainly did not help the democracy. They were kept busy trying to dodge it all the time, while the republicans assiduously took advantage of this, their weakest point. I do not think that the democracy would gain anything by the endorsement of free silver. For my part I think it would do harm to the country, and I am opposed to it. I think the passage of a free and unlimited coinage bill, such as Mr. Bland proposes, would be attended with very harmful results to the country. To state it in stronger terms, I believe it would make us lose the presidency."

Yesterday the whole country was rocked with suppressed excitement over the prospects of immediate war with Chili. Last night's reports from Washington assured the people that there was a lull in war talk, but that great interest was centered in the meeting of the national democratic committee. Today the war rumors will be revived again unless the correspondents discover something more startling to flash over the wires. Has it not occurred to most readers that all these warlike and threatening reports come from one source only, the imaginative correspondent. It will be quite time enough to conclude that war with Chili is inevitable when there shall be made public a proclamation to that effect. Until then the rumors appearing under Washington dates, preceded by flaring headlines, may be read much as the works of Jules Verne are.

S. S. BAILEY'S resolution to allow the horsemen's association the use of the West Michigan grounds on condition that the former society assume the responsibility of a certain amount of the Agricultural society's bonds is an eminently practicable solution of the relations between the two societies. They would then be on an equal footing, and would be co-equal in maintaining the usefulness of the grounds and their present excellent reputation.

MONKEYS escaped from a cage in front of an Adrian dry goods store, and so frightened the clerks and lady shoppers that business was suspended for an hour. Meanwhile the women stood upon the boxes and counters with upturned skirts. It is wickedly said that the faces of all the baldheads in Adrian were glued to the windows, intent upon learning the prevailing styles in hosiery.

In the year just ended the United States, Russia and India exported about 324,000,000 bushels of wheat against 228,100,000 bushels last year and 230,300,000 in 1889. Of the enormous exports for the year just ended over half were shipped in the last five months of the year, against only about 90,000,000 for the corresponding time last year.

In the French chamber of deputies Tuesday M. Castelin struck M. Laur a blow in the face. Others took the cue and there was a free-for-all slugging match among the deputies, which will without doubt result in several duels. The cause for the outbreak was an attempt made by a Boulangist member to ridicule the government.

Chicago temperance circles are all stirred up because it is reported that wine will be sold on the fair grounds. To invite Europeans to this country, and then compel them to drink Chicago water, would involve this country in complications which no amount of diplomacy could untangle.

If we only can have a war with Chili, what a Godsend it will be to the writers of "One-Eyed Zaks, the Scout" literature.

LOUISIANA republicans in state convention emphatically denounced the lottery octopus and nominated a full

state ticket upon a platform declaring for equal rights, an honest ballot and a fair count. The republicans never dodge in the face of an issue, and the Louisianians are but a fractional part of the entire body.

PRINCE ALBERT VICTOR sleeps with the "silent majority." Judging from his habits and associations in life, there can be no doubt that this hackneyed quotation was never more truly applied.

THE harmony just now being displayed among the national officers of the World's Fair is leaving a long gleaming track in front of it.

THE Grand Rapids women who are long on husband and short on lucre seem to be developing rapidly with the new year.

THE report that Grover Cleveland would send his first string of alligators to David B. Hill has been denied.

GRATZ suffering from cold is reported in all parts of the South.

AMUSEMENTS.

"Princess Toto" was the offering of the Wilbur company at Redmond's yesterday afternoon and evening. The opera is light and breezy and the company gave a brilliant and charming performance. The vitality of the Wilbur company is remarkable. For months they have given two performances daily, yet every member seems in the best of spirits, and their work is marked with care, vivacity and life. Susie Kurwin was very happy in the part of the princess and, like all of her efforts, there was nothing left undone to make the character entertaining. Dorothy Morton, Kohle Clark, Mr. Demick and Harvey were also on their mettle, and contributed much to make the opera amusing and delightful. This afternoon "Fanchette" will be repeated and to-night the "Grand Duchess."

Prof. Gleason, who has been in the horse training business for eighteen years, is certainly a master. He drew an admiring audience at Powers' last evening. His experiments were in many respects different than on the two preceding evenings. No matter how versatile the beast may be in his agility Prof. Gleason readily understood him and seems to take a diagnosis as does the skillful physician and brings him under subjection. His talks are full of instruction. Tonight Prof. Gleason will give away to "Poor Jonathan."

Prof. Smith had a good attendance at Hartman hall last evening, and his ability as a horse educator was well tested, as he had several vicious subjects, all of which he succeeded in bringing under control. These exhibitions, which are novel, intricate and varied in the mode of production or treatment can not be appreciated by description. They must be seen to be understood. Mr. Smith will be at the hall until the middle of next week.

Tonight, the indications are that Powers' Grand will contain a large audience, attracted thither to "Poor Jonathan," which will receive its first Grand Rapids representation at the hands of the Conried opera company. The opera is comic, romantic and altogether popular, in a musical way. It could not be otherwise coming from Milwaukee. The cast contains the names of well tried singers, supplemented by a large chorus and orchestra.

General Manager C. H. Garwood arrived in town yesterday, accompanied by James M. Lathrop, who is now duly installed as manager of Powers' Grand. Mr. Lathrop has been connected with a theater most of his life, and with the benefit of his experience there will soon be a new order and life about this theater, which patrons will soon recognize and appreciate. Mr. Lathrop is also a pleasing and genial gentleman, and it is a pleasure to bid him welcome to Grand Rapids.

The next attraction at Redmond's Grand will be Agnes Herndon in a new play entitled, "La Belle Marie." Miss Herndon is said to be a captivating actress, and a lady of great physical beauty. Her engagement will begin Sunday evening.

Today Mr. Geary's company of comedians will appear in the sensational border drama, "Nevada Jim, or the Eyes that Never Sleeps." Saturday afternoon Mr. Geary will give each of his little patrons a magic trick same as performed by Master Brady at the museum this week.

Miss Downer, who is now Mrs. Warner, received with her husband many callers at the museum yesterday.

Everybody has a favorable word for the excellent variety bill down at Smith's this week. Matinees tomorrow and Saturday.

A wild Oregon horse belonging to Mr. E. Campbell, No. 141 South Division street, and one of a herd of forty-eight and the most vicious brute of the entire herd, is to be brought to Hartman's hall tonight. The owner, Mr. Campbell, who is quite a horseman himself, informed the professor that this animal never had a rope or strap on him, and that he is wild. Woolly as the far west, he possesses the following habits: He bites, he fights, he kicks, and he is a runaway, so the professor has his hands full, and a lively struggle will be certain to occur. Independent of this there are seven other notorious horses on the list for tonight's program. This will be the banner night of the season.

OLD NEW YORK SLAVE.

Death of Old Uncle Ben Phillips at Richfield Springs. MIDDLETON, N. Y., Jan. 20.—There died at Richfield Springs the other day an interesting relic of New York's slavery days, commonly known as "Old Uncle Ben Phillips." He was born at Cherry Valley of slave parents, and passed most of his life near Otego Lake. His exact age was unknown, but he believed that he had passed his ninety-fifth year. His name, Benjamin Phillips, was that of his last master. Uncle Ben was fond of giving reminiscences of his days in slavery, and, among other things, that Mr. Phillips got him of his first master, a Mr. Hoke, in trade for a horse. He was among the last group of slaves liberated in the state in 1827, under the gradual emancipation act. Even then, he said, he had to run away from his old master in order to assert his claim to freedom. He was twice married—once as a slave and once as a freeman—and he leaves several children.

FIGHTING THE TOBACCO TRUST.

An Organization Which Proposes to Make It Interesting for the Combine. MIDDLETON, Ohio, Jan. 20.—Beyond all doubt an organization is being formed antagonistic to the American Tobacco Company. Paul J. Borg, the millionaire tobaccoist, states that while he has no knowledge of a coalition being formed to fight the trust, such a thing is beyond doubt a contin-

gency. The first intimation he had of the project was a few days ago, when an eastern man called on him. The gentleman had been detailed by a number of eastern capitalists—tobacco men—to make a tour through the west and ascertain the feeling of the tobacco manufacturers about the combination being formed. The story of the agent was that the eastern firms, almost to a unit, heartily endorsed the project and signified their willingness to become interested in the manufacture of cigarettes.

"The existing contingency," said Mr. Borg, "is certain to create a live organization. It is a certain contingency, in my mind, and it meets the approbation of the plug manufacturers, as they regard the fight that would follow as certain to end in victory."

CHARITY'S RICH REWARD.

A Grateful Baron Repays a Small Gift with a Gem Worth \$8000.

UPPER SANDUSKY, Ohio, Jan. 20.—Dr. A. Billhardt, of this place, many years ago while in Philadelphia one evening, walking through a well-known quarter of that city, was stopped by a good-looking gentleman who begged pitifully for assistance. His story of wrongs and misfortune was so plausible that the doctor handed him the amount asked for, and was on the point of continuing his walk when the stranger stopped him again, asked his name and address, promising that when fortune smiled upon him he should be well remembered. Yesterday, upon opening a small package directed to him from a mining town in South America, the doctor found glittering in a downy bit of cotton a brilliant scintillating with all the colors of the rainbow. The following card was inclosed:

"MELMORE, S. A., Nov. 6, 1891.—Dr. A. Billhardt: Dear Sir—Several years ago I met you in the streets of Philadelphia. I was starving and wasted you for a meal—you gave it to me. For your kindness I return you a stone. It is of great value, but nothing, I assure you, in comparison to the gratitude I feel for the kindness you extended."

That the doctor was amazed goes without saying, and no wonder. The gem weighs twenty karats and its value is estimated at \$8000.

Death of a Tall Man.

BALTIMORE, Md., Jan. 20.—"Col." Pickett Nelson, who claimed to be the tallest man on earth, died there Tuesday. He had been ill for three weeks with typhoid fever. His body measures 5 feet 5 inches in length, and in height he weighed 387 pounds. After death his frame relaxed and became 4 inches longer than it had been. Nelson was a colored man and was born in Essex county, Va. Both his parents were rather smaller than the average.

Secretary Blaine All Right Again.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 20.—Secretary Blaine has sufficiently recovered from his slight attack of illness in the cabinet meeting Tuesday to do considerable work on state department matters and receive several callers.

Seventy-Three Bodies Recovered.

ST. PETERSBURG, Jan. 20.—Seventy-three bodies have been recovered from the river at Tiflis, at the place where the bridge gave way under a multitude of people who were in a religious procession.

Heavy Snowfall in Spain.

MADRID, Jan. 20.—Dispatches from Saragossa state that a very severe snowstorm along the Pyrenees has completely broken off railway and telegraphic communication with France.

Senator Aldrich's Father is Dead.

PROVIDENCE, R. I., Jan. 20.—Aman Aldrich, father of United States Senator Aldrich, died of apoplexy at his home in Killingly, Conn., Tuesday afternoon, aged 84 years.

War Against the Wholesalers.

OMAHA, Neb., Jan. 20.—The implement dealers of the state met here Tuesday and formed a state organization to protect themselves against the wholesalers and jobbers, who have been selling direct to consumers. The new association will form a price list also.

Observed Lee's Birthday.

RICHMOND, Va., Jan. 20.—Tuesday was the birthday of Gen. Robert E. Lee and it was generally observed here.

Atlanta, Ga., Jan. 20.—Gen. Lee's birthday was observed here Tuesday.

Iowa Horticulturalists in Session.

DES MOINES, Ia., Jan. 20.—The twenty-sixth annual meeting of the Iowa State Horticultural society began at the horticultural rooms in the capitol Tuesday morning and will continue for three days.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS.

(Continued From First Page.)

damages could only be such an amount of money as would make the Fenton Metallic Co. good for its injuries.

2. I do not think the law requires the awarding of the contract in question to the Fenton Metallic Co. to be by a two-thirds vote of all the members elected; but as before explained, if such be the law, then there has been, for aught that appears, a substantial compliance therewith in the adoption of the Loomis resolution directing the contract to be executed.

3. No. 17, with facts before the board which should put it upon inquiry as to whether or not fraud had been practiced by the Fenton Metallic Co., it consummates its action, it will be estopped ever after from questioning the validity of such contract, and can not refuse to pay until there should be an adjustment without leaving itself liable for such damage as might arise from the fulfillment by the Fenton Metallic Co. of the complete contract, and this would include its profit. This would be a very unwise course to pursue.

4. If the Board of Supervisors should rescind its previous action without the consent of the Fenton Metallic Co., and the Fenton Metallic Co. had been guilty of no fraud, and the Board of Supervisors under no mistake at the time they directed the contract to be executed and signed, the county would be liable for damages, the extent of which I have previously explained.

If the county re-lit the contract to outside bidders, it would of course be obliged to pay the amount due to such contractors when the work was completed, or according to the terms of

such contract as they might enter into.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

T. F. McGowan.

Mr. Fremont Skeels:

We hand you herewith the question submitted to us, together with our answers to the same. The matter is not free from doubt, but we have reached the following conclusions:

Sub-division 6 of Howell's Annotated Statutes confers upon the Board of Supervisors power and authority "to cause to be erected the necessary buildings for poor houses, jails, clerks' offices and other county buildings, and to prescribe the time and manner of erecting the same."

The latter part of this sixth sub-division is the statutory authority for the purchase of vault fixtures but this power can not be exercised "without a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to such board," as provided by section 454 of Howell's Statutes.

The proceedings of this board show that power was not exercised in accordance with the statute, and therefore we are of the opinion that the Board of Supervisors did not award the contract to the Fenton Metallic company by adopting the majority report of the committee by a vote of 23 yeas, 10 nays, 3 absences and 1 not voting.

We are also of the opinion that the Board of Supervisors did not award the contract to the Fenton Metallic company by adopting the Loomis resolution without a yeas and nays vote.

We are also of the opinion that the articles specified in the bid of the Fenton Metallic company, when placed in the building, would become fixtures; they would be made to carry out the obvious purpose for which the building and offices were erected, and to permanently increase the value of the offices for occupation and use, and we think would become, when placed there, a part of the realty, although removable without injury either to themselves or the building.

We think the foregoing will sufficiently answer all the questions submitted to us. Respectfully submitted,

UHL & CRANE.

Dated January 18, 1892.

Gentlemen—The undersigned a minority of your committee to whom was referred certain questions relative to the vault fixture controversy, and the resolution of the gentlemen from the Second ward, also to obtain legal counsel thereon, which opinions are submitted with the majority report and are somewhat conflicting.

I have been unable to agree with the majority of said committee, one reason being that I feel positive as to the intent of the board in adopting by a majority vote the Fenton bid. Further, we have the opinion of our legal adviser, that the county is bound by the action of the board to the Fenton company, while the honorable gentlemen, Uhl and Crane have given their opinion quite adversely to that of the prosecuting attorney, yet admit in their opinion the question is not free from doubt. Therefore I cannot give my vote or influence for any move which is almost certain to involve the county in an extensive obligation.

Respectfully submitted,

J. T. GOULD.

Mr. J. W. Walker moved that the majority report be adopted.

Lost by the following vote, the yeas and nays being called for:

Yeas—Benjamin, Fehsenfeld, Gill, Hogadone, Loomis, Proctor, Roberts, Rosenburg, Schermerhorn, Skeels, Sullivan, Ulrich, J. W. Walker, Ward, Chairman—15.

Nays—Bergin, Clements, Coburn, Colson, Emmons, Frost, Gould, Havens, Hill, Kinney, Ladner, Leppink, O'Leary, Potter, Plumb, Sinclair, Smith, Smits, David Walker, Watkins, E. C. Woodworth, W. F. Woodworth—22.

Mr. Sullivan moved that the chairman and clerk of this Board be instructed to sign the contract with the Fenton Metallic company, provided the bond presented by said company is in their judgment sufficient.

Carried by the following vote, Mr. Gould calling for the yeas and nays:

Yeas—Messrs. Bergin, Clements, Coburn, Colson, Emmons, Frost, Gould, Havens, Hill, Kinney, Ladner, Leppink, O'Leary, Potter, Plumb, Sinclair, Smith, Smits, Sullivan, David Walker, Watkins, E. C. Woodworth, W. F. Woodworth—23.

Nays—Messrs. Benjamin, Fehsenfeld, Gill, Hogadone, Loomis, Proctor, Roberts, Rosenburg, Schermerhorn, Skeels, Sullivan, Ulrich, J. W. Walker, Ward—13.

Not voting—Chairman.

On motion of Mr. J. W. Walker, the board adjourned until tomorrow at 9 o'clock in the forenoon.

LEWIS A. SOLOMON,

Chairman.

CORNELIUS LA HARVEY,

Clerk.

AMUSEMENTS.

GRAND OPERA HOUSE

Brady & Garwood, Lessees and Managers.

T. F. Hickey, Resident Manager & Trust.

One Week { Commencing Sunday. } Jan. 17

Matinees Daily.

444 The Wilbur Opera Company

and

SUSIE KIRWIN

Monday Evening—The Grand Duchess.

Tuesday—Fanchette.

Wednesday—Falka.

Thursday—Pinocchio.

Friday—Behemian Girl.

Saturday Evening—Fanchette.

Sunday Evening—Fanchette.

Next Week—Agnes Herndon.

AMUSEMENTS.

POWER'S GRAND OPERA HOUSE.

Brady & Garwood, Lessees and Managers.

T. F. Hickey, Resident Manager & Trust.

FRIDAY NIGHT, JAN. 22,

PROF. O. R. GLEASON!

AMERICA'S

GREAT HORSEMAN,

WILL HANDLE

A VICIOUS STALLION

AND

FOUR OTHER VERY VICIOUS HORSES.

A GRAND BATTLE BETWEEN MAN AND HORSE FOR VICTORY.

K. E. GLEASON, Sole Owner

POWER'S GRAND OPERA HOUSE.

Brady & Garwood, Lessees and Managers.

T. F. Hickey, Resident Manager & Trust.

THURSDAY, JAN. 21.

CONRIED'S

COMIC OPERA COMPANY

HEINRICH CONRIED, Director.

In Milwaukee's Comedy Opera

POOR JONATHAN!

Sung for 20 Nights at the New York Casino.

OUR OWN ORCHESTRA

PRICES—25c, 50c, 75c, \$1.00 and \$1.50. Sale opens Tuesday.

HARTMAN'S HALL.

C. S. HARTMAN, Prop'r and Mgr.

THE ONLY HORSE EXHIBITION IN THE CITY.

TONIGHT

PROFESSOR

NORTON B. SMITH

will handle and subdue

A WILD OREGON HORSE.

Belonging to Mr. E. Campbell, 1st South Division street. This brute is the most wild and vicious horse of a herd of forty-eight.

HE BITES. HE FIGHTS. HE KICKS AND HE IS A RUNAWAY.

And he is pronounced a terror.

7—WILD AND VICIOUS HORSES—7

To be handled tonight, consisting of Runaways, Fighters, Shyres and a Notorious Kicker from the country.

FUN, INSTRUCTION AND EXCITEMENT!

ADMISSION—25, 50 and 75 cents.

Exhibition at 8 o'clock.